

**Key success factors**

- getting and keeping the reader's attention
- using rich and precise vocabulary

**ANALYSING A MODEL TEXT**

- a** You are going to read an article about childhood covering the areas below. What information would you include if you were writing about your country?
- What are the main differences between a child's life 50 years ago and a child's life now?
  - Why have these changes occurred?
  - Do you think the changes are positive or negative?
- b** Now read the article. Did the writer include any of your ideas? With a partner, choose what you think is the best title from the options below and say why you prefer it to the others.

**How childhood has changed**

**Changing childhood**

**My childhood**



**Children's lives** have changed enormously over the last 50 years. But do they have a happier childhood than you or I did?

It's difficult to look back on one's own childhood without some element of nostalgia. I have four brothers and sisters, and my memories are all about being with them, playing board games on the living room floor, or spending days in the street with the other neighbourhood children, racing up and down on our bikes, or exploring the nearby woods. My parents scarcely appear in these memories, except as providers either of meals or of severe reprimands after some particularly hazardous adventure.

These days, in the UK at least, the nature of childhood has changed dramatically. Firstly, families are smaller, and there are far more only children. It is common for both parents to work outside the home and there is the feeling that there just isn't time to bring up a large family, or that no one could possibly afford to have more than one child. As a result, today's boys and girls spend much of their time alone. Another major change is that youngsters today tend to spend a huge proportion of their free time at home, inside. More than anything this is due to the fact that parents worry far more than they used to about real or imagined dangers, so they wouldn't dream of letting their children play outside by themselves.

Finally, the kind of toys children have and the way they play is totally different. Computer and video games have replaced the board games and more active pastimes of my childhood. The irony is that so many of these devices are called 'interactive'. The fact that you can play electronic games on your own further increases the sense of isolation felt by many young people today.

Do these changes mean that children today have a less idyllic childhood than I had? I personally believe that they do, but perhaps every generation feels exactly the same.



c Answer with a partner.

- 1 What is the effect of the direct question in the introduction? Where is it answered?
- 2 What does the first main paragraph (not including the introductory sentence) focus on? What examples are given?
- 3 What are the changes that the writer has focused on in the third main paragraph, and what reasons have been given for the changes? Do you agree?
- 4 Underline the discourse markers that have been used to link the points in the second and third main paragraphs, e.g. *Firstly...*

#### Using synonyms

When you write, try not to repeat the same words and phrases too often. Instead, where possible, use a synonym or similar expression if you can think of one. This will both make the text more varied for the reader and help the article link together. A good monolingual dictionary or thesaurus can help you here.

d Find synonyms in the article for...

- 1 at the present time \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 children \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 alone, without adults \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 games \_\_\_\_\_

#### Using richer vocabulary

You can make your writing more colourful and interesting to read by trying to use a richer range of vocabulary instead of the most obvious words.

e Without looking back at the article, try to remember how the words in *italics* were changed to make the article more enjoyable to read.

- 1 Children's lives have changed *in a big way* \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 ...being in the street with the other *children who lived near us* \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 ...*going* up and down on our bikes... \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 ...after some particularly *dangerous* adventure. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 My parents *don't* appear *very often* in these memories... \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 ...think that no one *has enough money* to have more than one child. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 ...that children have a less *happy* childhood than I had? \_\_\_\_\_

## PLANNING WHAT TO WRITE

### Brainstorm possible content

a Look at the exam question below.

Many aspects of life have changed over the last 30 years. These include:

**marriage**

**dating**

**the role of women or / and men**

Write an article for an online magazine about how one of these areas has changed in your country and say whether you think these changes are positive or negative.

With a partner brainstorm for each topic...

- 1 what the situation used to be like and what the big changes are.
- 2 whether the situation has changed a lot in your country.
- 3 whether you think the changes are positive or negative and why.

Now decide which area you are going to write about and which ideas you want to include.

Remember that this is an article, not an essay. You don't necessarily want to include the most important points, but the ones that you could say something interesting about, or where you can think of any interesting personal examples.

b Think of a possible title for your article.

### TIPS for writing an article

- Give your article an interesting title.
- There is no fixed structure for an article, but it is important to have clear paragraphs. Use discourse markers to link your points or arguments.
- Make sure you use a suitable style, neither very formal nor informal.
- Make the introduction reasonably short. You could use a question or questions which you then answer in the article.
- Try to engage the reader, e.g. by referring to your personal experience.
- Try to vary your vocabulary using synonyms where possible.

## WRITING

You are going to write the article in approximately 250 words.

**DRAFT** your article, with

- a brief introduction, which refers to the changes and asks a question.
- two or three main paragraphs saying what the situation used to be like, and how it has changed.
- a conclusion, which refers back to the question in the introduction, and says whether you think the changes are positive or negative.

**EDIT** the article, cutting any irrelevant information and making sure it is the right length.

**CHECK** the article for mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and register.